

In connection with the petition filed under number RM-10787, I support the complete elimination of the Morse code requirement for amateur radio operators at the earliest possible date.

I believe the privileges accorded General and Extra operators should still be earned by passing the respective examinations for these classes. Learning and improvement must always be an absolute requirement.

The retention of the code requirement is discouraging prospective new amateurs and hampering the development of those who want to improve their knowledge and skills but are unable to master the code. For some, even after many months of twice-daily practice, the code is little more than unintelligible noise. Currently, the code stands as an unnecessary and sometimes discouraging impediment to learning and participation. Time wasted trying, without success, to learn the code can well be spent learning so many other things about radio and emergency communications.

We need more skilled participation now that our amateurs' role in emergency communications has become even more important in these times of terrorist activities. As we have seen from 9-11, Blackout 2003, hurricanes, tornadoes, forest fires, floods, earthquakes, and a number of other disasters, an independent volunteer amateur-financed and operated emergency communications system is essential to our society. The need has been well proven and our U.S. Department of Homeland Security has now recognized that need.

The code will always exist just as the many languages of the world exist. Those who enjoy using the code and/or find a need for it will always be free to use it and encourage and teach others to use it. This is as it should be for amateurs just as it is for people who enjoy driving antique cars, participating in historical reenactments, enjoying opera or classical music, collecting antiques, and doing many other things we are not required to do. At the same time, code proficiency as a licensing requirement is no longer relevant in this era of high technology communications. The rest of the world is coming to recognize this and so must we.